

## Message Text

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11

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 EUR-12 /065 W

----- 086977

R 130530Z NOV 74

FM AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2424

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMCONSUL BRISBANE BY POUCH

AMCONSUL PERTH BY POUCH

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, AS

SUBJECT: WHITLAM MORE THAN HOLDS HIS OWN IN PUBLIC JOUST  
WITH MELBOURNE ESTABLISHMENT

1. AT THE LORD MAYOR'S ANNUAL BANQUET ON NOVEMBER 11 (REFERRED TO BY THE PRIME MINISTER AS "THE MOST EXCLUSIVE BUCKS' NIGHT IN AUSTRALIA") THE MELBOURNE ESTABLISHMENT WAS PRESENT EN MASSE. NATURALLY THE AUDIENCE WAS HEAVILY ORIENTED TOWARD THE LIBERAL PARTY AND THE ATMOSPHERE TOWARD PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM'S ADDRESS WAS CORRESPONDINGLY COOL. WHITLAM'S PERFORMANCE WAS BEST DESCRIBED BY ONE WAG AS "THROWING THE LION TO THE CHRISTIANS".

2. LION WHITLAM PERFORMED ADMIRABLY, REPLYING TO THE RATHER BRASH AND BUMPTIOUS OPENING SPEECH OF MELBOURNE'S NEW YOUNGEST- EVER (AGE 34) LORD MAYOR WITH SOME MASTERLY SWIPES WHICH DREW BLOOD FROM THE LORD MAYOR AND HEARTY LAUGHTER FROM THE AUDIENCE. THE OCCASION WAS A BEAUTIFULLY-STAGED PERSENTATION FOR THE NEW LORD MAYOR, RONALD J. WALKER,  
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WHO IS VIEWED BY LIBERAL PARTY STALWARTS AS A DYNAMIC,

ACTIVIST FIGURE CHOSEN TO BE IN SHARP CONTRAST TO A LONG SERIES OF RATHER STODGY ELDERS WHO HAVE PRECEDED HIM IN MELBOURNE'S TOP JOB. THE LIBERAL PARTY IS TRYING TO PROJECT THE IMAGE OF DYNAMIC ADMINISTRATION OF THE HUGH SPRAWLING METROPOLIS OF GREATER MELBOURNE (POPULATION 2.8 MILLION PLUS) AND THUS IMPRESS THE VOTERS WITH A MODERN EFFICIENT IMAGE FOR THE LIBERAL PARTY.

3. RON WALKER'S BACKERS WERE VERY PLEASED WITH HIS OPENING SPEECH, WHICH SET A DEFINITE POLITICAL TONE WITH ITS NONE-TOO-GOOD-NATURED TWITTING OF THE LABOR PRIME MINISTER BEFORE THIS BASICALLY CONSERVATIVE FORUM. WHITLAM'S RIPOSTES SUCCESSFULLY AVOIDED THE EXCESSIVE SARCASM FOR WHICH HE IS FAMOUS AND THUS MADE MORE EFFECTIVE HIS PLEA FOR GREATLY STEPPED-UP PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL AFFAIRS BY A STRONGER CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IN CANBERRA. INSISTENCE THAT CANBERRA SHOULD PLAY A LARGE ROLE IN LOCAL AFFAIRS, HE SAID, WAS THE BIGGEST SINGLE FACTOR WHICH HAD BROUGHT HIS LABOR PARTY INTO OFFICE. HIS FACTUAL RECITAL OF THE LARGE CONTRIBUTIONS WHICH THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS MADE TO PARTICULAR SECTORS IN MELBOURNE WAS CLEARLY AIMED AT PROVING HIS CENTRAL THESIS THAT ONLY AN INCREASED CENTRAL GOVERNMENT ROLE FROM CANBERRA COULD BRING ABOUT THE NECESSARY IMPROVEMENTS IN HOUSING, SOCIAL SERVICES, PUBLIC UTILITIES AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE NECESSARY FOR EFFICIENT OPERATION OF A MODERN METROPOLIS LIKE MELBOURNE.

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
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**Subject:** WHITLAM MORE THAN HOLDS HIS OWN IN PUBLIC JOUST WITH MELBOURNE ESTABLISHMENT  
**TAGS:** PINT, AS, (WALKER, RONALD J), (WHITLAM, E GOUGH)  
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**Type:** TE  
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